

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 22, 2011 ("Office Action"). Pending claims 1, 5, 7 and 9 have been amended to clarify the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention, and to facilitate prosecution. However, no new matter has been added and the scope of the claims has not been substantively altered.

Summary of Examiner Interview

A telephone interview with the Examiner was conducted on November 19, 2011. Applicant's representative thanks the Examiner for her time and careful attention. Applicant's representative began the interview by indicating that the goal was to speed and facilitate prosecution going forward by ensuring a mutual understanding of the claimed invention and the cited prior art. During the interview, the Examiner and Applicant's representative discussed the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Numerous features of Rabiner et al. (US 6,524,251) (hereinafter "Rabiner") were discussed. Applicant's representative noted that elements 108 (Fig. 3B) and 109 (Fig. 3F) of Rabiner are parts of distinct, alternative embodiments, and do not appear to be usable together in the same embodiment. Applicant's representative and the Examiner then discussed the catheter structure of the instant invention, as well as that of

Rabiner. In particular, Applicant's representative discussed how the hemicylindrical parts of the invention abut one another as recited in the claims, whereas elements 109 of Rabiner are connected by connecting element 113, but do not abut. The Examiner indicated that the abutting surfaces themselves may not be easily discernable from the figures. The discussion then turned to the "longitudinal groove" of the instant application, which the Examiner had analogized to the aspiration channel of Rabiner. Applicant's representative addressed the different functions and structures of the longitudinal groove for needle insertion and the aspiration channel for evacuating fluids. Applicant's representative stressed that the disclosure of Rabiner does not contemplate the use of a needle with the catheter's transducer. The Examiner acknowledged some differences, and advised that these issues be clearly addressed in Applicant's Remarks. Regarding Francis (US 5,954,637) (hereinafter "Francis"), Applicant's representative and the Examiner briefly touched on elements 110a and 110b. Concluding the interview, the Examiner indicated that distinctions had been identified, making an additional search appropriate. She also expressed that, if deemed advisable after the additional search, she might be amenable to corresponding with Applicant's representative regarding an Examiner's Amendment, thereby substantially facilitating prosecution of the application.